

An Interview with
**IMOGENE
ANDERSEN**

*An Oral History produced by
Robert D. McCracken*

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
2009



Imogene Andersen
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PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the *uhs*, *ahs* and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger—and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have long known and admired; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and Nevada—too numerous to mention by name—who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. “Bobby” Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project in 1987. Subsequently, Commissioners Richard L. Carver, Dave Hannigan, and Barbara J. Raper provided support. In this current round of interviews, Nye County Commissioners Andrew Borasky, Roberta “Midge” Carver, Joni Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Peter Liakopoulos provided unyielding support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the program within Nye County in its first years. More recently, Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, gave his unwavering support. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Lacy’s office, provided funds for this round of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioner Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Mr. Lacy for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Lacy.

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Kimberley Dickey provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Jean Charney, Julie Lancaster, and Darlene Morse also transcribed a number of interviews. Proofreading, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Marilyn Anderson, Joni Eastley, Julie Lancaster, Teri Jurgens Lefever, and Darlene Morse. Joni Eastley proofed all the manuscripts and often double-checked, as best as possible, the spelling of people's names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Long-time Pahrump resident Harry Ford, founder and director of the Pahrump Valley Museum, served as a consultant throughout the project; his participation was essential. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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—Robert D. McCracken
2009

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while most of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890, most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

The spectacular mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), Rhyolite (1904), Manhattan (1905), and Round Mountain (1906) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known

about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the *Round Mountain Nugget*, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. The *Rhyolite Herald*, longest surviving of Rhyolite/Bullfrog's three newspapers, lasted from 1905 to 1912. The *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* was in business from 1905 to 1906. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All these communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities once their own newspapers folded, although Beatty was served by the *Beatty Bulletin*, published as part of the *Goldfield News* between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 resides in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the Lied Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length **and** detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each **community's** life and development. The collection of interviews for each community

can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique—some are large, others are small—yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral histories as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories have also been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for a long time and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided at the site. And in the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

—R.D.M.

Interview with Imogene Andersen and Robert McCracken at Ms. Andersen's home in Pahrump, Nevada, November 6, 2008.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Imogene, could you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

IA: It's Imogene Bowman; no middle name.

RM: And when and where were you born?

IA: I was born in Logandale, Nevada, September 22, 1927.

RM: What was your father's name?

IA: Elmer Squire Bowman.

RM: Do you know his birth date and when and where he was born?

IA: He was born March 26, 1893, in Minersville, Utah.

RM: And how about your mother?

IA: My mother's name was Elizabeth Rebecca Leavitt and she was born July 3, 1892, in Bunkerville, Nevada.

RM: Where did you grow up?

IA: I was born and raised in Logandale, in the Moapa Valley.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about what life was like there when you were growing up?

IA: My dad had a dairy and I really didn't do too much around there until we got to be teenagers. Then we had to wash the milkers and the equipment at night. We went on the clay hills by the Bowman reservoir. We'd go up there and get on a raft that we had, take a snack, and go out in the willows. And we rode horses. We made our own entertainment.

RM: Where did you go to school?

IA: I went to Logandale Elementary—that is now the museum over there—and then went

to Overton to high school.

RM: Did you take the bus to Overton?

IA: We took the bus and we were the first ones on and last ones off. We had to go to Overton for all our sports.

RM: How many kids were in your class in Logandale?

IA: I believe it was about 17.

RM: Did you like school?

IA: I liked it. I'm not much of a reader, but I liked history. And when I got into high school, I liked home ec and sports.

RM: Do you look back on your childhood with great fondness?

IA: My folks were very into us kids. They cared about us and they took good care of us.

RM: And your family were members of the LDS Church there? Where was the church you attended?

IA: There was one chapel in Logandale.

RM: Most of the people living there were Mormons, weren't they?

IA: Yes, they were. It's different now but then it was mostly Mormons.

RM: Was it a close-knit community?

IA: Yes, it was kind of close-knit. My Bowman grandparents lived in Bunkerville. We'd go over there and spend time with them in the summer.

RM: How big was Logandale when you were growing up?

IA: I would say maybe 400 people.

RM: And most of them were ranchers or farmers, weren't they?

IA: Yes. My dad and another fellow had a store and they let everybody charge for the month. It's different nowadays.

RM: Yes, it is. When did you meet your husband, Digger?

IA: He lived in Overton and he went to the same high school. He was two years ahead of me.

RM: Could you give me his full name?

IA: His name is Linford O'Dell Andersen.

RM: And do you know when and where he was born?

IA: He was born in Overton September 7, 1925.

RM: Were his family farmers?

IA: Yes.

RM: Did they always call him "Digger" over there?

IA: No, he went by Lynn. He went by Lynn all through school and through the service.

RM: When did you two get married?

IA: We got married March 31 of '46.

RM: Digger was in the war, wasn't he?

IA: Yes, he was a paratrooper.

RM: What theatre was he in?

IA: He was in the 81stth Airborne, I think.

RM: In Europe?

IA: Yes.

RM: Are there any highlights of his experiences there that stand out in your mind?

IA: Well, he walked across the London Bridge. And he was a prisoner of war for 90 days. I have pictures of his camps and some of the stuff he had when he was there.

RM: Was he wounded in the war?

IA: No, he wasn't wounded but went from 160 pounds down to 90-something in three

months.

RM: That's awful.

IA: He didn't have anything much to eat.

RM: And then he came home and then what?

IA: He came back and he was in Santa Barbara. They took him over there to get him able to eat.

RM: He had to be rehabilitated.

IA: I've got a little book of some of the guys that he was with but he never really kept track of any. A lot of them passed away.

RM: When did he come back to Overton?

IA: He came back to Overton in '45.

RM: And then you guys dated and then got married?

IA: I went to a dance with one of his friends and he was there and I left his friend and went with him.

RM: Did you always have your eye on him?

IA: He didn't look too much for girls. He was playing basketball. He went with one of my friends for a while but. . . .

RM: Where did you get married?

IA: We got married in Logandale in my folks' home.

RM: Then where did you settle?

IA: We lived in Overton and he helped his dad with the dairy and he had eight or ten cows of his own.

RM: Did you live on the farm?

IA: No, we rented a house in Overton. And then that summer Digger came to Pahrump

with my dad. My dad had the place up north where Dorothy Dorothy . . . He was drilling a well up there and he heard about this place down here so he came out in the summer and Lynn, and I think Perry, came out with him. Then the first day of October they moved my mother and the rest of us out here.

RM: He was drilling up where Dorothy Dorothy had her place, at approximately where the RV Park is at Leslie Street and Highway 160? Was he a well-driller, too?

IA: No, he wasn't really. But he had a rig. He was going to drill for water up there.

RM: How many acres did he buy up north?

IA: I don't know.

RM: But then the Manse Ranch became available.

IA: Yes, and he bought 6,500 acres.

RM: How much did he pay?

IA: I don't know the total, but it was \$40 an acre. It wasn't a lot. They had cattle on the ranch and he got them and there was hay.

RM: I have heard that he heard that the ranch was for sale from a banker in Las Vegas because he'd been hauling out here, hadn't he?

IA: Yes, Manetti. I guess he was up there drilling and he went into the bank and the banker told him about this place out here that was for sale and he decided that if he could get it, he would sell what he had and take over this ranch. That's when he moved out here in the summer.

RM: Tell me what was on the ranch when he and Digger first came over here.

IA: There was mostly alfalfa and cattle, maybe a couple hundred acres of alfalfa and about a hundred head of cattle.

RM: It was beef cattle, wasn't it?

IA: Yes.

RM: And they were grazing them in the mountains, too, weren't they?

IA: Yes, they had permits to run them in the valley and on the mountain out by Dry Lake and everywhere. I think that he had to pay so much a year for it. They'd take them up Wheeler, Carpenter Canyon, and Trout Canyon. He had an Indian, Harry Sackett, who helped him and he had Sammy Fancher. They lived out here and helped him with his cattle. Then he pastured them and in the winter he raised corn and sugar cane for silage to feed them.

RM: Oh, really? You raised sugar cane here?

IA: Yes, and chopped it up with sorghum or whatever and put it in a trench sided by concrete and covered with dirt.

RM: What kind of house was on the Manse Ranch when your dad moved here?

IA: There was one big main house, a white one, that's gone now. And then there were about four other little houses. Everybody had a place.

RM: The little houses were for ranch hands?

IA: Or for the owner's kids. One house was like a cook place where they fed their help. We all had running water and gas stoves, fridges, and kerosene lamps. I've got two lamps over there that I used. I have an iron now that you put on the stove to heat.

RM: Describe your little house. How many bedrooms did it have?

IA: There was only one bedroom. At first there was only the one room, the kitchen, and a bathroom. Later, Lynn's dad, Faye Andersen, came out and put two more rooms on the front. It was rather small.

RM: How old was the house?

IA: Oh, I don't know.

RM: Didn't it date way back?

IA: Yes, it was made out of that stuff like that shop that they tore down and took up to the museum.

RM: Oh, it was boards?

IA: The houses were boards except for the main one; it was adobe. That's where my folks stayed.

RM: How big was the main house?

IA: It had three bedrooms, one bath, a big long front room, a dining room, and a big kitchen and a back porch.

RM: And that's where your dad lived at first?

IA: Yes, he lived there until '60. Then he bought some houses out at Boulder City and moved in one of those. And there's still a building up at the Manse School that he brought in for the school.

RM: That's a long ways to take a house, isn't it?

IA: Yes. He brought several houses in and he brought in a bunch of little buildings for the Mexican nationals to live in when we had cotton.

RM: Your dad was a very enterprising person, wasn't he?

IA: He worked very hard. He was involved in everything.

RM: I wrote a column for the newspaper and I said that he's the Father of Modern Pahrump and I think everybody agreed with that statement. Do you have any more to say about him and his lifestyle here?

IA: When he started that school, he bought a little yellow delivery truck with sliding doors and my sister Mary and I used to take turns driving the kids to school. We didn't get any money for it, we just did it for the school. It was where the Manse School is now. They first had that little red schoolhouse that I think my oldest daughter went to. It was about

where that Mexican [restaurant] is on 372 that's boarded up now. They had one teacher for eight grades, then they moved them down to that other school and they had three or four teachers. We would get movies for the kids once in a while, kind of through the PTA.

RM: I'm not clear exactly where the Manse house and spring and everything else were. In relation to your house here on Digger Road, where were they?

IA: Down there where those trees are.

RM: Down by the golf course?

IA: Yes, right down through here. You can see it from my house.

RM: That's where the original Manse Ranch was? Do you own that property?

IA: No, my brother does. Murton owns it but [my nephew] Gary Bowman is kind of taking care of it. We took a hayride down there one day; we had a family reunion in May.

RM: Is there much left there from the original days?

IA: There's nothing but the spring. One spring is still there. The other one is probably still there but it's got a lot of cattails. It hasn't been cleaned.

RM: But none of the old buildings are there. Can you see where the buildings were?

IA: Well, I know where the main house was. There are two arborvitae bushes that are still there. They were a ways from the house.

RM: Describe again what was there when you came out.

IA: There were quite a few fruit trees and a grape orchard, vines, out in the back, and a wine cellar. And there were three big walnut trees. The kids would pick the walnuts up.

RM: Black walnuts?

IA: There was one black walnut tree but it never really did much. And there were lots of grape vines around that one spring. I wished I'd taken pictures then. And there were four other houses and a shop.

RM: Were the old corrals still there?

IA: There were old corrals and some granaries. And then in 1960, my dad moved in one of the houses he got out in Boulder City and Lynn and I moved into the big house when we had kids. My brothers Melvin and Murton were in high school when we moved to Pahrump.

RM: Tell me who came to Pahrump when Bowman family moved here.

IA: Well, my dad and Perry and Lynn came first and then my sister Kenna and her husband, Arlan, came out and my sister Mary and her husband, Lyle. They weren't owners; they worked for wages. We worked for my father from '46 to '60.

RM: Were you a part owner?

IA: We were part owners. In about '49, my father went to Barstow, California, and bought four cars and a big Suburban-like thing. He bought us all new cars. Ours was a blue and white Buick. Then a few years later, he went up to Cedar City and bought some more new cars. He was very good to us. The next time he bought cars, he went into Cashman's on Main Street in Las Vegas.

RM: Cashman was a Cadillac dealership, wasn't it? Did he buy you all Cadillacs?

IA: No, they had other cars. The first one we had was Buick and then we went to Oldsmobile. He paid all our medical bills and bought all our groceries. He'd buy flour in 100-pound sacks and he'd buy yeast like in pound bricks and we'd just cut off some to make bread.

RM: That's remarkable. He bought 6,500 acres initially; then did he add any more later?

IA: No.

RM: Where was Lois Kellogg's ranch in relation to yours?

IA: Clarks out of Utah bought it and then Max Hafen bought it.

RM: Did any of the brothers and sisters have their own parts of the ranch or was it kind of

a family ranch?

IA: When we divided it up, Melvin, my one brother, had Gamebird; and then Murton had the area where the houses were and we had the next one over, and Mary and Lyle had the next one. Where Lynn and I had was mostly where the golf course is on Mountain Falls and we went all the way to Homestead. Kenna and Arlan got the property down where Tim Hafen is now and Perry and Norma were down farther.

RM: And when did they divide it up like that?

IA: Perry and Norma went up on their own first, three or four years after we came. Then Kenna and Arlan went on their own and Arlan had his father, Joe Frehner, and his mother, Myrtle, with him; they lived out here. We divided all the rest of it up in the early '60s.

RM: Did each brother or sister farm their section, then?

IA: Yes, we farmed our own.

RM: Did you share farm equipment and all of that or did each one have their own plows and so forth?

IA: Each one had their own.

RM: Are they doing farming on any part of the old Manse Ranch now?

IA: Murton is. Gary Bowman has got some alfalfa down there now. I last heard they had about 100 acres and he cuts the hay and bales it.

RM: Where does he sell?

IA: He sells it locally.

RM: Did all of them get into cotton?

IA: Yes, everybody had their cotton. At first, my dad leased 110 acres to Leon Hughes and Vernon Schwartz.

RM: And that's when Hughes tested cotton and they could see that cotton would grow here

and do well.

IA: Yes, Leon Hughes raised it for one year and then my dad went on his own. My dad took a baler so that they could bale the cotton in something like big hay bales. He had a truck and Lynn hauled the cotton down to Arvin by Bakersfield; that's where the gin was.

RM: Were many people growing cotton here before Walt Williams came in?

IA: Well, we were, then everybody started raising it.

RM: Were there any good tricks you had to learn growing cotton here?

IA: I don't know. There are kids growing up out here that chopped cotton for us.

RM: Was there anything like watering or fertilizer or anything that you had to know about?

IA: You had to have good ground. They used siphon tubes to pull the water out of the ditch. The cotton fields were pretty, especially when they bloomed and when they opened up.

RM: Now, when did your mother come out here?

IA: She came out in October, when we did.

RM: Tell me about her experience and what she thought.

IA: My mother just went along with my dad. She never really worked; she wasn't really young when she came here.

RM: How old was she?

IA: I would say in her 50s.

RM: Your dad was in his 50s when he came here. He must have really been vigorous.

IA: He was a very hard-working man. He'd ride one horse and when it wore out he'd get another one. He was that way over in Moapa Valley. He worked for everything over there and when he was ready to come out over here the people said "What are we going to do, Elmer, if you're leaving? What are we going to do?" Because they depended on him for lots of things. And that's the way he was out here. He worked for the road, he worked for the

school, he worked for the power, he worked for. . . .

RM: Did they hate to leave Moapa because it had been their home?

IA: I don't think so; he was looking for something more to do.

RM: Did your mom hate to leave because all her friends and everything were there?

IA: She never said much.

RM: How about you?

IA: Lynn told my dad, he said, "I don't have any money."

And my dad said, "I don't want you for money, I want you for work."

RM: Was he kind of laughing when he said or was he pretty serious?

IA: I think he was serious, [Laughter] Lynn said he worked for me for 14 years—from '46 to '60.

RM: What did you think about leaving Moapa?

IA: I was all right.

RM: And you came with your mother in October?

IA: The first day of October. It was a very cold day, I remember.

RM: What did you think when you first saw the Pahrump Valley?

IA: It was a long old road from Highway 95 to the Manse Ranch. The road was one gully after another. Being about seven miles from Pahrump, you knew somebody was coming when you would see the dust. [Laughs]

RM: And how did Digger like Pahrump?

IA: He liked it pretty well. He was driving a truck for my dad a lot. When my dad got the dairy in the '50s, he got two families from Smithfield, Utah, one to milk and one to feed. He gave them a house to live in—Dale and Laura Fonnesbeck and Dick and Aline Prease. Laura still comes and spends time with me, and I go to see her.

RM: When did he start the dairy?

IA: It must have been in 1954, '55. When the cotton was ginned, Lynn would haul that cotton down to Arvin by Bakersfield and then he would go to Fallon and get hay to bring down to the dairy, and sometimes he went to Enterprise, Utah, and got hay to mix with our hay to get a better production of milk.

RM: Was your hay not quite as good?

IA: I think that was a higher elevation and it was probably better hay. So Lynn was driving the truck a lot. He's the only one that drove the truck at the ranch.

RM: How many cows was your dad milking?

IA: I think when he got going, he had about 150 cows.

RM: That's a huge number of cows to milk, isn't it? And it wasn't as mechanized in those days.

IA: It was a lot of cows. We had all the milk we wanted. When he got the dairy, he put in two generators. He'd run one one day and then run the other the next day and back and forth. After he got them, we all had power from the generators for our houses. It was better than gas. Before, we had gas washers and gas irons. I didn't really like gas washers. You had to mix gas and oil together and then you'd have to stomp on the thing to start it. You'd get halfway through your laundry and then you'd run out of gas and have to start all over again. And then you'd hang your clothes on the line and they'd freeze.

RM: Did you ever have to wash on the board?

IA: I tried that for a few wash loads and I decided that wasn't my cup of tea.

RM: I don't know if I've ever seen a gas iron.

IA: Well, mine's buried.

RM: You buried it?

IA: I didn't bury it, my brother did. [Laughs] The ranch had that old wine cellar and everybody had a section for their stuff, with shelves; we'd put our bottled fruit and things down there. Well, when we divided the property, my brother went and covered that all up. There's probably still food on the shelf down there somewhere and my gas iron and some other things.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Did you have children when you came here?

IA: No.

RM: How many kids did you have?

IA: I have six girls.

RM: Tell me about that. First, what's it like being pregnant and being this remote?

IA: We had to go to Vegas to the doctor.

RM: Did you always make it in time for the delivery?

IA: The first few we went around . . . but Lynn bought a house on North First Street with the GI Bill and then when we went to town, my brothers and sisters and everyone, we had a place to stay.

RM: So when you were near delivery time, you'd stay there?

IA: Yes. We lost our first daughter as a baby. She got whooping cough from Gary and Laraine, Perry's kids. So we've got five other girls.

RM: Do you want to tell their names and their ages?

IA: The oldest one is Carol Jean and she's 60. Her last name is Reno and she lives in Reno. She had 11 kids. And then Phyllis Pike is the second one; she had a girl and a boy; she's 57. And then Merna Meier is about 54.

RM: And where does she live?

IA: She lives in Sparks, Nevada. And she's got a girl and two boys. And then there's Connie Ferrell. She's 51 and she had one boy. And Maureen Bono is 47 and she had three girls and one boy.

RM: And what was it like to raise your girls in Pahrump during those years?

IA: Well, they entertained themselves, they and their cousins. They rode horses, rode bikes, played on the sand hills, went swimming in the spring. The spring was kept clean and they went swimming there. They kind of entertained themselves.

RM: As a mother, what was your life like? What did it consist of?

IA: Well, I was busy. [Laughs] Cooking and cleaning. In those days, everything was made from scratch. You did not go to the store and buy something already prepared. I had to learn how to cook everything. We made our own bread. And I had a Montgomery Ward ice cream maker—a six-quart ice cream maker, it was electric. We'd make ice cream.

RM: Did you have a Servel gas refrigerator?

IA: Yes. And later we got electric refrigerators. We did a lot of canning. We had those four-quart pressure pans. We'd work three or four of them all day. We'd can corn.

RM: You would shuck it off of the ear; is that the right word?

IA: Yes, you pull the shucks down and then cut it off the cob and then we'd bottle it. We bottled peaches and everything.

RM: And were you growing all these things yourself?

IA: Well, some of them.

RM: Were you growing peaches here?

IA: There were some but they weren't really the best. Our best thing we raised was apples. We bought some fruit trees from Davis Nursery in Las Vegas and they weren't true. They were pretty good-sized trees, but the apricots, you couldn't pit. They weren't good trees.

RM: Did you grow any grapes?

IA: We had a little row of seedless grapes. There were muscats and a wine grape and some seedless grape vines when we came to Pahrump.

RM: What were you growing in your garden?

IA: We raised lots of stuff: corn, melons—all kinds of melons—black-eyed peas, string beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash. The girls would sell the stuff in the summertime for money for school clothes.

RM: Where would they sell it?

IA: People would come to the house after the road was in. They'd come out from Vegas and buy. I'd go up to the post office and park up there and sell melons.

RM: Did your dad keep a big garden?

IA: We more or less raised it all together. We sold the melons when we went on our own. We delivered melons, vegetables, and corn to stores in Las Vegas; one store was Vegas Village.

RM: How big was the family garden, would you say? An acre or a half-acre?

IA: It wasn't all that big, maybe one to two acres in size.

RM: And it had to be irrigated.

IA: Well, yes, we had to water it.

RM: When did your family give up on the dairy?

IA: It went for about three years and then he sold all his cows up at Gardnerville.

RM: How did he store the milk?

IA: We had a big steel vat that they put it in. There was one room with this big vat in it and then the trucks would come out and haul it to Vegas. They'd come out about three times a week, or maybe every other day.

RM: Was the room chilled?

IA: No, just the vat.

IA: We'd get them to bring us out ~~milk~~ to use.

RM: You weren't using your own milk?

IA: Well, for the babies.

RM: Who was buying your milk?

IA: Rancho Grande was one, and Anderson Dairy. And there was another place before Anderson—Updike.

RM: Why did your family give up on the dairy?

IA: I really don't know why. I think he was making enough money; I don't know what the reason was. But he sold all his cows to Gardnerville.

RM: What did you have? Holsteins?

IA: Holsteins, Jerseys and Guernseys.

RM: What did they turn to after they quit the dairy?

IA: Then it was just cotton.

RM: So cotton looked like a better deal, probably.

IA: Well, yes, some years. It all depends on the price, you know, when you farm. Mary's husband Lyle would crop-dust. He'd spray the cotton—and the alfalfa, if it needed it.

RM: Tell me some more about what it was like to have a family in a remote place like this at that time.

IA: If your kids got sick you had to take them all the way to Vegas to the doctor.

RM: And that was going up past Johnnie?

IA: Yes, it was 35 miles of gravel road to Highway 95 until the road came through.

RM: So they had to be probably pretty sick before you'd take them in? [Laughter] I mean, you couldn't just take them for anything.

IA: Well, yes. I guess you're kind of roughing it.

RM: Did you get pretty good with doctoring kids with your home remedies?

IA: I guess I went to my mother.

RM: Was she a lot of help?

IA: Yes, she was. We didn't have anybody else. We'd tend each other's kids. Sometimes, if their parents were going to town, we'd watch them. Sometimes my sister Mary and I would take all our kids and go to Vegas.

RM: How many children did Mary have?

IA: Mary had two girls and three boys.

RM: What other children were there in the family group?

IA: Perry and Norma had two boys and three girls. Loretta, my sister in Las Vegas, didn't marry until she was 80. She married her high-school sweetheart.

RM: Well, what made her rush into it? [Laughter]

IA: When she got out of school, this guy wanted to marry her and he was seven years older than she was and my dad told him no, that he didn't have anything and my father just wanted him to leave her alone. He married another girl and they had eight kids, four boys and four girls. His wife had died and when Perry, my brother, passed away, Charlie dedicated his grave and he wanted to talk to Loretta and Loretta kind of ignored him. He was living in Alamo so she called him up and he came down and they talked it over and decided to get married. He was 87 and she was 80.

RM: That's a wonderful story. That's true love, isn't it?

IA: Yes. **She was** the country clerk for Clark County for years and years. She retired after about 50 years.

RM: **And she carried** the torch for him all that time?

IA: **Well, no,** she had other boyfriends but she never did marry.

RM: **How long** did they have together?

IA: He died a couple of years ago. They lived together about six years.

RM: That's a lovely story.

IA: Not everybody can do that.

RM: That's right. It's never too late.

IA: I'm past 80 and I don't know as I'm wanting to look for anybody. [Laughter] We went to the reception and they were walking around holding hands like they were teenagers.

RM: Isn't that wonderful. So he died.

IA: She lives in Las Vegas. His kids are good to her.

RM: Do you have a grandson named Jason in Vegas?

IA: No, I have a grandson Jason out here. My grandson in Vegas is Jerome, Jerome Ferrel.

RM: Yes, he's my banker. Did you have radio?

IA: We had radios with batteries.

RM: Did the kids listen to it a lot?

IA: Yes, and they had a little record ~~player~~, I still have it but I don't have any records.

You know those 45s? I saved a lot of stuff. I've only moved four times in my life. I moved from Overton to Pahrump and then I moved ~~three times~~ in Pahrump.

RM: How did cotton affect your life and your family's life?

IA: We had some good years with cotton. Other years, we didn't do as good. It always depended on the price. That's the way ~~farming is~~, up and down.

RM: Was it an easier life or a harder ~~life than~~ dairying?

IA: I don't know. It's not as steady.

RM: To me, dairying is the hardest ~~life of all~~ because it never quits. Morning and night, forever. What did you do in the winter, the off season for the cotton?

IA: We had friends and we played cards and popped popcorn, made waffles, whatever.

RM: Did you have a community church, or where did you hold your services?

IA: My dad would hold them in his house at first and then he put it in another house and they sometimes went down to Arlan's father's place.

RM: How many people would attend those services?

IA: It was more or less family; not too many.

RM: What role did your father play in the Hafens coming to the valley?

IA: Max bought the ranch after Clarks left and went back to Utah.

RM: Did he hear about it from your dad?

IA: Yes, I think he did.

RM: Were there any other families that came out here then that either stayed or maybe didn't last?

IA: No, it was all the family. And my dad owned that down where Burson had his place, down on Homestead.

RM: So your family, along with the Hafens, pretty much owned the south end—where the old Manse Ranch was and the Kellogg place and everything.

IA: Yes. And in 1978, Digger and I donated five acres to the VFW for their building down there.

RM: That's nice. Did Digger talk much about the war?

IA: Not to me.

RM: Was it just as though he'd like to forget it?

IA: Well, he never had much to say.

RM: Tell me about him.

IA: He was a giving man. When he had melons and stuff, he gave a lot of it away.

Especially after we sold our ranch and Gary Bowman was farming it, he got Gary to have a garden and the first year he spent \$700 for seed and fertilizer and stuff. He was giving it away and I said, boy that's a money-making deal. He wouldn't let anybody get in his corn patch and take some but he'd pick it and take it to them. He didn't want them to be grabbing different ears; you pick it down the row. So he'd pick it.

RM: How did he get his nickname, "Digger?"

IA: I think Betty Bolling kind of gave it to him because his middle name is O'Dell.

RM: Oh, Digger O'Dell—from the radio program Fibber McGee and Molly? When would that have been?

IA: I don't know. It might have been in the '70s.

RM: That late? So in the '50s and '60s he was known as Lynn but then they started calling him Digger.

IA: And he liked Digger.

RM: I remember that from Fibber McGee and Molly; that's cute.

IA: And that's why my sign up there says Digger. I didn't know the state was putting that up. I had a board sign made for Christmas up where the well is, where the old road came in. We had our sign there and somebody stole it.

RM: Oh, and what did the sign say?

IA: It just had "Digger" on it. So I had another one made, and when we built this house and put the road in, the state put "Digger" up there so my Digger sign is down in the garage.

RM: So the name "Digger" is official. When did he pass on?

IA: He passed away on February 15, 1998. He was 72.

RM: Tell me about what you know about life in the north end of the valley, like some of the ranchers and farmers up there.

IA: Where Simkins Road is there were Paul and Alan Simkins. I think Enterprise, Utah, is where they were raised. I can't think of that guy up north; there were three of them who bought the Simkins ranch. Paul never married but Alan married Zula. She was working over to Cactus Springs, this side of Indian Springs. But there's nothing there now. We kind of ran around with Alan and Zula.

RM: Right, there used to be a bar there.

IA: Yes, that's where she worked. He married her and we kind of ran around and did this and that back and forth.

RM: Did you know Pop Buol at all?

IA: Yes. He made wine. I was anemic and he gave my dad a quart of wine for me to drink and I couldn't drink it.

RM: Too nasty tasting?

IA: [Laughs] I didn't like it. But he was quite a guy, old Pop Buol. He had some nut trees that were kind of in a circle.

RM: How about the Fords?

IA: Stanley Ford hauled the mail in from Shoshone. And there were the Raycrafts.

RM: What do you remember about them?

IA: I remember the house they had; it was kind of a big house with a screened porch on the front.

RM: You're the senior white woman in the valley, aren't you? I don't think any white woman has lived here longer. Maybe some of the Indians have.

IA: Well, Alice, Claire, and Annabelle Sharp, Lorraine Jim, and Cynthia Lynch are older Indian women. Annie Beck (she used to ride a horse for miles daily) and Libbey Scott (Louie Sharp's mother) are also older Indian women.

RM: How do you see the changes that have taken place in the town?

IA: Some of them I don't like. I miss farming. They're kind of over-building with houses. It just looks funny to look out my window and see houses and the golf course down where it was all farming.

RM: Yes, and the golf course is on what was your land.

IA: Most of that golf course is on our property.

RM: And it was flat, wasn't it? I mean, they bulldozed those hills.

IA: There were some sand hills down there at this end, but they're all. . . .

RM: Where does the golf course get its water?

IA: From wells—our well and Lyle and Mary's well.

RM: Is your well dropping?

IA: Since we sold, I don't know. It was flowing 3,600 gallons a minute when we came to Pahrump.

RM: And it doesn't do that now.

IA: No, they pump it now.

RM: And the original Manse spring still flows some?

IA: There's one down there where all those trees are; I think they dug on it. There's another one down there that has cattails and things in it.

RM: What do you like about the changes in Pahrump since you came here?

IA: Well, I don't know. I don't go too much. There are too many people and too many cars.

RM: What do you think when you see Vegas?

IA: When we were farming, I drove in there three or four times a week for parts and things, but I don't drive in Vegas now anymore.

RM: Did you go over Mountain Springs or up the other way?

IA: We went both ways.

RM: Did the Mountain Springs highway make the trip much easier for you?

IA: Yes, it did. It's nice.

RM: What do you recall about power coming into the valley?

IA: My dad worked very hard for the power. So did Hank Records and Paul Warner up on the mountain. Paul Warner had the bar up there.

RM: Oh, up at the top of Mountain Springs?

IA: Those three were really the ones that got it in.

RM: That's right. I got to be pretty good friends with Hank. I interviewed him years ago.

IA: At first, the power was [called] Amargosa.

RM: That's right, it wasn't Valley Electric. How do you see the future of Pahrump?

IA: Right now it's not very good; it's not going anywhere. It's kind of at a standstill.

RM: Looking down the road, ten or 20 years, what do you see?

IA: I probably won't be here in ten, 20 years from now.

RM: Well, a lot of us won't. [Laughter] But what do you think it will be?

IA: Well, if it starts up again, it'll grow.

RM: How do you see the water picture?

IA: I don't really like what goes on with the water picture. They took some of our water rights out of our well and put them by Chicken Ranch, where those houses are now. But the water's still coming out of the well. They need to put meters on them because all the water is still coming out of this well and they've got water down there.

RM: Is the water here good?

IA: It's not bad. Down Manse Road farther, there's places that it isn't very good water.

RM: Did you ever find any old artifacts from the old days on the Manse?

IA: A few arrowheads is all.

RM: Did you ever find anything from the Manse Ranch like an old pick or shovel or pot?

IA: I have an old bell. The doctor had it, Doctor Cornell. It was on the front of that house. When I moved up here in the '80s, I took it off the front of the main house down there.

RM: Who knows how long it had been there.

IA: The doctor must have put it on there.

RM: Yes, it's got an 1878 on it. Did you know Dr. Cornell at all?

IA: All I know is that he was a doctor from San Diego. We went down there with my folks to sign the papers to buy it. Our name is Andersen and they put "son" on everything and they weren't very happy when they found out it was "sen" because they had to change it all. That's the trouble with "sen."

RM: Yes, people think it's "son." Is it Danish?

IA: Yes.

RM: What nationality are the Bowmans? Are they English?

IA: English and German.

RM: When did your father's family and your mother's family come over here?

IA: My father's father, William Calvert Bowman, was born in 1859 in Salt Lake City. His mother, Lydia Loretta, was born in 1863 in Toquerville, Utah. My mother's family were Leavitts. My grandmother on my mother's side, Mary Elizabeth, lived in Bunkerville, Utah. She would come out and stay with my parents for a few weeks at a time. (She would always bring six chickens with her.)

RM: Did their families come out with the migration of the Mormons?

IA: They could have.

RM: And then came south after they settled in Salt Lake?

IA: From Minersville.

RM: Where is Minersville?

IA: When you go up to Utah and go in the direction of Grand Junction, Colorado, up above Beaver, then turn and go back left. I've been wanting to go back there.

RM: So instead of going right on I-70, you go back to the west.

IA: Yes. It's probably not a very big place, a spot in the road. That's where my dad came from.

RM: Was he raised there?

IA: I think so.

RM: What brought him to the Moapa Valley?

IA: I think he was just looking for something better.

RM: How do you look on your life in the Pahrump Valley?

IA: It's been a good life. I raised my kids here and it was all family. Most of them have left but I've got nephews and nieces and one daughter and grandkids here. They come and see me and I go and see them. And I have a few lady friends and I travel quite a bit.

RM: Where do you go?

IA: Digger and I went to Hawaii on a cruise and then we went to Mexico on a cruise. After he passed away, I went to Alaska. I went to the Caribbean with three ladies on a cruise and I've traveled through the United States with ladies by car and by plane. I went to Alaska again with my two daughters and her daughter and Phyllis and Jim and Connie and Shelly and her two boys and another couple. We all went to Alaska on a cruise.

I've seen quite a bit of the United States. Digger and I had a motor home. When we sold our ranch, we got a motor home and we had a boat together with our friends and we'd

go fishing. But it just didn't last long enough.

I went back to Detroit with my daughter and her friends and his dad and I tried to entertain on the road with stories.

RM: Do you have any good stories of Pahrump? Any strange characters?

IA: There's a lot of strange people. [Laughter]

RM: Were they kind of individualists?

IA: I don't know. Everybody was kind of friendly.

RM: And they're not now?

IA: You go uptown and you don't hardly ever see anyone you know.

RM: It's a totally different place now, isn't it? Were people always willing to help each other then, too?

IA: Oh, yes. We had a lot of benefits; I made lots of rolls for auctions. They'd auction them off by the dozen to raise money for a family or whatever. I worked on the PTA when my kids were in school but I haven't done much. I don't like politics.

RM: Was Pahrump a very political place?

IA: Some of it is and was. I don't get involved with politics. They might be good people when they go in but they're not too good when they come out. [Laughs] That's my opinion.

RM: Is there anything that I've neglected to touch on?

IA: I hauled wood in the winter to keep my fire going.

RM: Where did you get your wood?

IA: I'd get it out of Utah.

RM: How did you deal with the heat when you first came out here?

IA: It never really bothered me much.

RM: Everybody has air conditioning now.

IA: When we got into the big house, there was a great big old swamp cooler in there. I still have a swamp cooler. I have air conditioning but in the summer I use the swamp cooler until it gets cloudy. When it gets cloudy, I leave it in my bedroom and close my patio and put the air on in here.

RM: Of course, you grew up with the heat in Moapa. Moapa is warmer than it is here, isn't it?

IA: Well, yes; it's lower.

RM: Do you still have an LDS church in Pahrump?

IA: Yes, there are four wards and one church. They start 8:00 o'clock in the morning, 10:00, noon, and 2:00 in the afternoon. Every year they change the hours. They're supposed to build a new church down here on Manse somewhere.

RM: How many members do you think are in the church?

IA: There's a lot of them, with four wards. I imagine that there are at least 400 in a ward.

RM: Are there any other things you'd like to tell me about?

IA: I never, ever remember my father and mother arguing in front of us kids. They might have had words but we never heard it. It's different nowadays. Kids know everything.

RM: Do you think that's good?

IA: No. I don't think it's good.

RM: Why do you think things are different now?

IA: People nowadays want everything and if somebody else has it, they want it. They get themselves in trouble by going past their means.

RM: Yes, and they get themselves all worked up, don't they?

IA: Yes, and it causes lots of problems. In the olden days, you, if you could afford it, you got it. Now, you get it whether you can afford it or not. That's why a lot of people are in

trouble right now with their homes. They let them have them when they couldn't afford them.

RM: Yes. Thinking back to your first years in the Pahrump Valley, do you think people were happier then than they are now?

IA: Yes, I think they were. Because it was not such fast times. When I was young, I went to Utah with my sister Loretta and my mother and I took two girls—the two oldest girls I left in Overton and I took the youngest ones with me. We went to Salt Lake, and everything was so slow. I couldn't believe how everything was slowed down so much up there compared to Las Vegas. That had to be about 48 years ago. Now it's fast up there. But it seemed like they were so slow up there compared to Las Vegas.

RM: Well, thank you so much for talking with me.

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